

News

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Northern Quarter wins 'Best Neighbourhood in Britain' award

Manchester's Northern Quarter, which was given new life when Muse Developments' Smithfield scheme kick started its regeneration in 1999, has been named 'Best Neighbourhood in Britain' by the Academy of Urbanism.

The quarter's contribution to cultural life in the city was acknowledged by the Academy's members, who include top architects, developers and designers.

Mike Payton, design and construction director at Muse Developments, is delighted that the transformation of the Northern Quarter has been recognised by this award. "The area had gone into dramatic decline in the 1980s," he said. "It was a real 'no go area of the city' and somewhere that people didn't want to walk past, let alone live!"

Continued Mike: "Working with Manchester City Council we carefully designed the Smithfield scheme to create a real sense of community, combining trendy apartments with independent and unique bars, restaurants and museums. It's now a destination area, and the 'cool' place to live within the city."

Matt Crompton, joint managing director at Muse, added: "We're incredibly proud of the work that has been achieved at Smithfield. It's what Muse is all about, regenerating declined areas into destination areas. The Northern Quarter is a prime example of how regeneration can have such a positive impact."

Judges were impressed by the Northern Quarter's charm after a visit over the summer. John Thompson, chairman of the Academy of Urbanism, said: "Thanks to a long-term programme of development and regeneration, the Northern Quarter has become a vibrant contemporary extension to Manchester city centre, while retaining its own character."

He continued: "The Academy of Urbanism created these awards to recognise places which have helped enhance local quality of life. The Northern Quarter is a wonderful example of this."

Still the largest single development site within the Northern Quarter, Smithfield continues to be at the forefront of Manchester's regeneration. Its fifth phase, an Express by Holiday Inn hotel, is due for completion next summer.

In addition there are plans to restore the superb Mackie Mayor building to its former glory. Negotiations into appropriate uses for this listed building are under way, but these may include bespoke office elements, public art and a visitor attraction as well as new public space.

Ends.